

# Hawaiian language

**Hawaiian** (Hawaiian: *ʻŌlelo Hawai ʻi*, pronounced [ʔoːˈlɛlo həˈvɐjʔi]<sup>[3]</sup> is a Polynesian language that takes its name from Hawai ʻi, the largest island in the tropical North Pacific archipelago where it developed. Hawaiian, along with English, is an official language of the State of Hawaii.<sup>[4]</sup> King Kamehameha III established the first Hawaiian-language constitution in 1839 and 1840.

For various reasons, including territorial legislation establishing English as the official language in schools, the number of native speakers of Hawaiian gradually decreased during the period from the 1830s to the 1950s. Hawaiian was essentially displaced by English on six of seven inhabited islands. In 2001, native speakers of Hawaiian amounted to less than 0.1% of the statewide population. Linguists were unsure if Hawaiian and other endangered languages would survive.<sup>[5][6]</sup>

Nevertheless, from around 1949 to the present day, there has been a gradual increase in attention to and promotion of the language. Public Hawaiian-language immersion preschools called Pūnana Leo were established in 1984; other immersion schools followed soon after that. The first students to start in immersion preschool have now graduated from college and many are fluent Hawaiian speakers. The federal government has acknowledged this development. For example, the Hawaiian National Park Language Correction Act of 2000 changed the names of several national parks in Hawai ʻi, observing the Hawaiian spelling.<sup>[7]</sup> However, the language is still classified as critically endangered by UNESCO.<sup>[8]</sup>

A creole language, Hawaiian Pidgin (or Hawaii Creole English, HCE), is more commonly spoken in Hawai ʻi than Hawaiian. Some linguists, as well as many locals, argue that Hawaiian Pidgin is a dialect of American English.<sup>[9]</sup>

The Hawaiian alphabet has 13 letters: five vowels: a e i o u (each with a long pronunciation and a short one) and eight consonants: he ke la mu nu pi we, including a glottal stop called ʻokina.

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Hawaiian	
<span><i>ʻŌlelo Hawai ʻi</i></span>	
Native to	Hawaiian Islands
Region	Hawai ʻi and Ni ʻ ihau <sup><span>[</span>1<span>]</span></sup>
Ethnicity	Hawaiians
Native speakers	~24,000 <span> </span> (2008)
Language family	Austronesian <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Malayo-Polynesian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Oceanic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Polynesian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Eastern Polynesian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Marquesic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Hawaiian</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Early forms	Proto-Austronesian <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proto-Malayo-Polynesian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proto-Oceanic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proto-Polynesian</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Dialects	Standard Hawaiian <div></div> Niihau dialect <div></div> Other dialects
Writing system	Latin (Hawaiian alphabet) <div></div> Hawaiian Braille
Signed forms	Hawai ʻi Sign Language (HSL)
Official status	
<div>Official language<span> </span>in</div>	<div> <div><span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span>United States</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span>Hawaii</li></ul> </div>
Language codes	
<span>ISO 639-2</span>	<span>haw</span> ( <span>https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=183</span> )
<span>ISO 639-3</span>	haw
Glottolog	hawa1245 <span> </span> ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/id/hawa1245</span> ) <sup><span>[</span>2<span>]</span></sup>
Linguasphere	39-CAQ-e

## Name

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The Hawaiian language takes its name from the largest island in the Hawaiian state, Hawaii (*Hawai ‘i* in the Hawaiian language). The island name was first written in English in 1778 by British explorer James Cook and his crew members. They wrote it as "Owhyhee" or "Owhyee". Explorers Mortimer (1791) and Otto von Kotzebue (1821) used that spelling.<sup>[10]</sup>

The initial "O" in the name is a reflection of the fact that Hawaiian predicates unique identity by using a copula form, *o*, immediately before a proper noun.<sup>[11]</sup> Thus, in Hawaiian, the name of the island is expressed by saying *O Hawai ‘i*, which means "[This] is Hawai ‘i."<sup>[12]</sup> The Cook expedition also wrote "Otaheite" rather than "Tahiti."<sup>[13]</sup>

The spelling "why" in the name reflects the [hw] pronunciation of *wh* in 18th-century English (still used in parts of the English-speaking world). *Why* was pronounced [hwai]. The spelling "hee" or "ee" in the name represents the sounds [hi], or [i].<sup>[14]</sup>

Putting the parts together, *O-why-(h)ee* reflects [o-hwai-i], a reasonable approximation of the native pronunciation, [o heweiʔi].

American missionaries bound for Hawai ‘i used the phrases "Owhihe Language" and "Owhyhee language" in Boston prior to their departure in October 1819 and during their five-month voyage to Hawai ‘i.<sup>[15]</sup> They still used such phrases as late as March 1822.<sup>[16]</sup> However, by July 1823, they had begun using the phrase "Hawaiian Language."<sup>[17]</sup>

In Hawaiian, *‘Ōlelo Hawai ‘i* means "language: Hawaiian", since adjectives follow nouns.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Family and origin

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Hawaiian is a Polynesian member of the Austronesian language family.<sup>[19]</sup> It is closely related to other Polynesian languages, such as Samoa, Marquesan, Tahitian, Māori, Rapa Nui (the language of Easter Island) and Tongan.<sup>[20]</sup>

According to Schütz (1994), the Marquesans colonized the archipelago in roughly 300 CE<sup>[21]</sup> followed by later waves of immigration from the Society Islands and Samoa-Tonga. Their languages, over time, became the Hawaiian language within the Hawaiian Islands.<sup>[22]</sup> Kimura and Wilson (1983) also state:

Linguists agree that Hawaiian is closely related to Eastern Polynesian, with a particularly strong link in the Southern Marquesas, and a secondary link in Tahiti, which may be explained by voyaging between the Hawaiian and Society Islands.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Methods of proving Hawaiian's linguistic relationships

The genetic history of the Hawaiian language is demonstrated primarily through the application of lexicostatistics, which involves quantitative comparison of lexical cognates, and the comparative method.<sup>[24][25]</sup> Both the number of cognates and the phonological similarity of cognates are measures of language relationship.

The following table provides a limited lexicostatistical data set for ten numbers.<sup>[26]</sup> The asterisk (\*) is used to show that these are hypothetical, reconstructed forms. In the table, the year date of the modern forms is rounded off to 2000 CE to emphasize the 6000-year time lapse since the PAN era.

Numbers in Austronesian languages

Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>PAN, c. 4000 BCE</b>	*isa	*DuSa	*telu	*Sepat	*lima	*enem	*pitu	*walu	*Siwa	*puluq
<b>Amis</b>	cecaɣ	tusa	tulu	sepat	lima	enem	pitu	falu	siwa	pulu'
<b>Yami</b>	asa	doa	atlo	apat	lima	anem	pito	wau	siyam	pao
<b>Tagalog</b>	isá	dalawá	tatló	ápat	limá	ánim	pitó	waló	siyám	sampu
<b>Ilocano</b>	maysá	dua	talló	uppát	limá	inném	pitó	waló	siam	sangapúlo
<b>Cebuano</b>	usá	duhá	tuló	upat	limá	unom	pitó	waló	siyám	napulu
<b>Chamorro</b>	maisa/hâcha	hugua	tulu	fattfat	lima	gunum	fiti	guálu	sigua	mânô/fulu
<b>Malagasy</b>	isa	roa	telo	efatra	dimy	enina	fito	valo	sivy	folo
<b>Malay/Indonesian</b>	sa/se/satu	dua	tiga	empat	lima	enam	tujuh	lapan/delapan	sembilan	sepuluh
<b>Minangkabau</b>	ciek/satu	duo	tigo	ampek/empat	limo	anam/enam	tujuah/tujoh	salapan/lapan	sɔmbilan	sapuluah/sepuloh
<b>Javanese</b>	siji	loro	telu	papat	lima	nem	pitu	wolu	sanga	sepuluh
<b>Tetun</b>	ida	rua	tolu	hat	lima	nen	hitu	ualu	sia	sanulu
<b>Fijian</b>	dua	rua	tolu	vā	lima	ono	vitu	walu	ciwa	tini (archaic: sagavulu)
<b>Kiribati</b>	teuana	uoua	teniua	aua	nimaua	onoua	itua	waniua	ruaiua	tebuina
<b>Tongan</b>	taha	ua	tolu	fā	nima	ono	fitu	valu	hiva	-fulu
<b>Sāmoan</b>	tasi	lua	tolu	fā	lima	ono	fitu	valu	iva	sefulu
<b>Māori</b>	tahi	rua	toru	whā	rima	ono	whitu	waru	iwa	tekau (archaic: ngahuru)
<b>Tahitian</b>	hō'ē	piti	toru	maha	pae	ōno	hitu	va'u	iva	'ahuru
<b>Marquesan</b>	tahi	'ua	to'u	hā	'ima	ono	hitu	va'u	iva	'ahu'u
<b>Leeward Islands dialect</b>	tahi	rua	toru	fā	rima	ono	fitu	varu	iva	'ahuru
<b>Cook Islands Māori</b>	ta'i	rua	toru	ā	rima	ono	itu	varu	iva	ta'ingaoru
<b>Hawaiian</b>	‘ekahi	‘elua	‘ekolu	‘ehā	‘elima	‘eono	‘ehiku	‘ewalu	‘eiwa	- ‘umi

Note: For the number "10", the Tongan form in the table is part of the word /hogo-fulu/ ('ten'). The Hawaiian cognate is part of the word /ana-hulu/ ('ten days'); however, the more common word for "10" used in counting and quantifying is /ʔumi/, a different root.

Application of the lexicostatistical method to the data in the table will show the four languages to be related to one another, with Tagalog having 100% cognacy with PAN, while Hawaiian and Tongan have 100% cognacy with each other, but 90% with Tagalog and PAN. This is because the forms for each number are cognates, except the Hawaiian and Tongan words for the number "1", which are cognate with each other, but not with Tagalog and PAN. When the full set of 200 meanings is used, the percentages will be much lower. For example, Elbert found Hawaiian and Tongan to have 49% (98 ÷ 200) shared cognacy.<sup>[27]</sup> This points out the importance of data-set size for this method, where less data leads to cruder results, while more data leads to better results.<sup>[27]</sup>

Application of the comparative method will show partly different genetic relationships. It will point out sound changes,<sup>[28]</sup> such as:

1. the loss of all PAN word-final consonants in Tongan and Hawaiian;
2. lowering of PAN \*u to Tagalog [o] in word-final syllables;
3. retention of PAN \*t in word-initial and word-medial position in Tagalog and Tongan, but shift to /k/ in Hawaiian;
4. retention of PAN \*p in Tagalog, but shift to /f/ in Tongan and /h/ in Hawaiian.

This method will recognize sound change #1 as a shared innovation of Hawaiian and Tongan. It will also take the Hawaiian and Tongan cognates for "1" as another shared innovation. Due to these exclusively shared features, Hawaiian and Tongan are found to be more closely related to one another than either is to Tagalog or Amis.

The forms in the table show that the Austronesian vowels tend to be relatively stable, while the consonants are relatively volatile. It is also apparent that the Hawaiian words for "3", "5", and "8" have remained essentially unchanged for 6000 years.

## History

### First European contact

In 1778, British explorer James Cook made Europe's initial, recorded first contact with Hawai‘i, beginning a new phase in the development of Hawaiian. During the next forty years, the sounds of Spanish (1789), Russian (1804), French (1816), and German (1816) arrived in Hawai‘i via other explorers and businessmen. Hawaiian began to be written for the first time, largely restricted to isolated names and words, and word lists collected by explorers and travelers.<sup>[29]</sup>

The early explorers and merchants who first brought European languages to the Hawaiian islands also took on a few native crew members who brought the Hawaiian language into new territory.<sup>[30]</sup> Hawaiians took these nautical jobs because their traditional way of life changed due to plantations, and although there were not enough of these Hawaiian-speaking explorers to establish any viable speech communities abroad, they still had a noticeable presence.<sup>[31]</sup> One of them, a boy in his teens known as Obookiah (‘*Ōpūkaha ‘ia*), had a major impact on the future of the language. He sailed to New England, where he eventually became a student at the Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut. He inspired New Englanders to support a Christian mission to Hawai‘i, and provided information on the Hawaiian language to the American missionaries there prior to their departure for Hawai‘i in 1819.<sup>[32]</sup>

## Folk tales

Like all natural spoken languages, the Hawaiian language was originally just an oral language. The native people of the Hawaiian language relayed religion, traditions, history, and views of their world through stories that were handed down from generation to generation. One form of storytelling most commonly associated with the Hawaiian islands is hula. Nathaniel B. Emerson notes that "It kept the communal imagination in living touch with the nation's legendary past".<sup>[33]</sup>

The islanders' connection with their stories is argued to be one reason why Captain James Cook received a pleasant welcome. Marshall Sahlins has observed that Hawaiian folktales began bearing similar content to those of the Western world in the eighteenth century.<sup>[34]</sup> He argues this was caused by the timing of Captain Cook's arrival, which was coincidentally when the indigenous Hawaiians were celebrating the Makahiki festival. The islanders' story foretold of the god Lono's return at the time of the Makahiki festival.<sup>[35]</sup>

## Written Hawaiian

In 1820, Protestant missionaries from New England arrived in Hawai‘i.

Adelbert von Chamisso might have consulted with a native speaker of Hawaiian in Berlin, Germany, before publishing his grammar of Hawaiian (*Über die Hawaiische Sprache*) in 1837.<sup>[36]</sup> When Hawaiian King David Kalākaua took a trip around the world, he brought his native language with him. When his wife, Queen Kapi‘olani, and his sister, Princess (later Queen) Lili‘uokalani, took a trip across North America and on to the British Islands, in 1887, Lili‘uokalani's composition *Aloha ‘Oe* was already a famous song in the U.S.<sup>[37]</sup>

In 1834, the first Hawaiian-language newspapers were published by missionaries working with locals. The missionaries also played a significant role in publishing a vocabulary (1836)<sup>[38]</sup> grammar (1854)<sup>[39]</sup> and dictionary (1865)<sup>[40]</sup> of Hawaiian. Literacy in Hawaiian was widespread among the local population, especially ethnic Hawaiians. Use of the language among the general population might have peaked around 1881. Even so, some people worried, as early as 1854, that the language was "soon destined to extinction."<sup>[41]</sup>

## Suppression of Hawaiian

The decline of the Hawaiian language dates back to a coup that overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy and dethroned the existing Hawaiian queen. Thereafter, a law was instituted that banned the Hawaiian language from being taught.<sup>[42]</sup> The law cited as banning the Hawaiian language is identified as Act 57, sec. 30 of the 1896 Laws of the Republic of Hawai‘i:

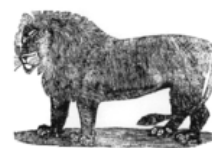
The English Language shall be the medium and basis of instruction in all public and private schools, provided that where it is desired that another language shall be taught in addition to the English language, such instruction may be authorized by the Department, either by its rules, the curriculum of the school, or by direct order in any particular instance. Any schools that shall not conform to the provisions of this section shall not be recognized by the Department.

— The Laws of Hawaii, Chapter 10, Section 123<sup>[43]</sup>

This law established English as the medium of instruction for the government-recognized schools both "public and private". While it did not ban or make illegal the Hawaiian language in other contexts, its implementation in the schools had far-reaching effects. Those who had been pushing for English-only schools took this law as licence to extinguish the native language at the early education level. While the law stopped short of making Hawaiian illegal (it was still the dominant language spoken at the time), many children who spoke Hawaiian at school, including on the playground, were disciplined. This included corporal punishment and going to the home of the offending child to advise them strongly to stop speaking it in their home. Moreover, the law specifically provided for teaching languages "in addition to the English language," reducing Hawaiian to the status of a foreign language, subject to approval by the Department. Hawaiian was not taught initially in any school, including the all-Hawaiian Kamehameha Schools. This is largely because when these schools were founded, like Kamehameha Schools founded in 1887 (nine years before this law), Hawaiian was being spoken in the home. Once this law was enacted, individuals at these institutions took it upon themselves to enforce a ban on Hawaiian. Beginning in 1900, Mary Kawena Pukui, who was later the co-author of the Hawaiian–English Dictionary, was punished for speaking Hawaiian by being rapped on the forehead, allowed to eat only bread and water for lunch, and denied home visits on holidays.<sup>[44]</sup> Winona Beamer was expelled from Kamehameha Schools in 1937 for chanting Hawaiian.<sup>[45]</sup>

## 1949 to present

In 1949, the legislature of the Territory of Hawai‘i commissioned Mary Pukui and Samuel Elbert to write a new dictionary of Hawaiian, either revising the Andrews-Parker work or starting from scratch.<sup>[46]</sup> Pukui and Elbert took a middle course, using what they could from the Andrews dictionary, but making certain improvements and additions that were more significant than a minor revision. The dictionary they produced, in 1957, introduced an era of gradual increase in attention to the language and culture.



HE LIONA

Headline from May 16, 1834, issue of newspaper published by Lorrin Andrews and students at Lahainaluna School

Efforts to promote the language have increased in recent decades. Hawaiian-language "immersion" schools are now open to children whose families want to reintroduce Hawaiian language for future generations.<sup>[47]</sup> The *‘Aha Pūnana Leo’s* Hawaiian language preschools in *Hilo, Hawaii*, have received international recognition.<sup>[48]</sup> The local National Public Radio station features a short segment titled "Hawaiian word of the day" and a Hawaiian language news broadcast. Honolulu television station KGMB ran a weekly Hawaiian language program, *‘Āha ‘i ‘Ōlelo Ola*, as recently as 2010.<sup>[49]</sup> Additionally, the Sunday editions of the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, the largest newspaper in Hawaii, feature a brief article called *Kauakukalahale* written entirely in Hawaiian by teachers, students, and community members.<sup>[50]</sup>

Today, the number of native speakers of Hawaiian, which was under 0.1% of the statewide population in 1997, has risen to 2,000, out of 24,000 total who are fluent in the language, according to the US 2011 census. On six of the seven permanently inhabited islands, Hawaiian has been largely displaced by English, but on *Ni‘ihau*, native speakers of Hawaiian have remained fairly isolated and have continued to use Hawaiian almost exclusively.<sup>[51][42][52]</sup>

Ni‘ihau

Ni‘ihau is the only area in the world where Hawaiian is the first language and English is a foreign language.<sup>[53]</sup>

— Samuel Elbert and Mary Pukui, *Hawaiian Grammar* (1979)

The isolated island of *Ni‘ihau*, located off the southwest coast of *Kauai*, is the one island where Hawaiian (more specifically a local dialect of Hawaiian known as *Niihau dialect*) is still spoken as the language of daily life.<sup>[51]</sup> Elbert & Pukui (1979:23) states that "[v]ariations in Hawaiian dialects have not been systematically studied", and that "[t]he dialect of Ni‘ihau is the most aberrant and the one most in need of study". They recognized that Ni‘ihauans can speak Hawaiian in substantially different ways. Their statements are based in part on some specific observations made by Newbrand (1951). (See *Hawaiian phonological processes*)

Orthography

Hawaiians had no written language prior to Western contact, except for petroglyph symbols. The modern Hawaiian alphabet, *ka pī‘āpā Hawai‘i*, is based on the Latin script. Hawaiian words end *only*<sup>[54]</sup> in vowels, and every consonant must be followed by a vowel. The Hawaiian alphabetical order has all of the vowels before the consonants,<sup>[55]</sup> as in the following chart.

Aa	Ee	Ii	Oo	Uu	Hh	Kk	Ll	Mm	Nn	Pp	Ww	‘
/a/	/e/	/i/	/o/	/u/	/h/	/k~t/	/l/	/m/	/n/	/p/	/v~w/	/ʔ/

Origin

This writing system was developed by American Protestant missionaries during 1820–1826.<sup>[56]</sup> It was the first thing they ever printed in *Hawai‘i*, on January 7, 1822, and it originally included the consonants *B*, *D*, *R*, *T*, and *V*, in addition to the current ones (*H*, *K*, *L*, *M*, *N*, *P*, *W*), and it had *F*, *G*, *S*, *Y* and *Z* for "spelling foreign words". The initial printing also showed the five vowel letters (*A*, *E*, *I*, *O*, *U*) and seven of the short diphthongs (*AE*, *AI*, *AO*, *AU*, *EI*, *EU*, *OU*).<sup>[57]</sup>

In 1826, the developers voted to eliminate some of the letters which represented functionally redundant *allophones* (called "interchangeable letters"), enabling the Hawaiian alphabet to approach the ideal state of one-symbol-one-*phoneme*, and thereby optimizing the ease with which people could teach and learn the reading and writing of Hawaiian.<sup>[58]</sup> For example, instead of spelling one and the same word as *pule*, *bule*, *pure*, and *bure* (because of interchangeable *p/b* and *l/r*), the word is spelled only as *pule*.

- Interchangeable B/P. *B* was dropped, *P* was kept.
- Interchangeable L/R. *R* and *D* were dropped, *L* was kept.
- Interchangeable K/T. *T* was dropped, *K* was kept.
- Interchangeable V/W. *V* was dropped, *W* was kept.

However, hundreds of words were very rapidly borrowed into Hawaiian from English, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Syriac.<sup>[59][60][61]</sup> Although these loan words were necessarily Hawaiianized, they often retained some of their "non-Hawaiian letters" in their published forms. For example, *Brazil* fully Hawaiianized is *Palakila*, but retaining "foreign letters" it is *Barazila*.<sup>[62]</sup> Another example is *Gibraltar*, written as *Kipalaleka* or *Gibaraleta*.<sup>[63]</sup> While [z] and [g] are not regarded as Hawaiian sounds, [b], [ɿ], and [t] were represented in the original alphabet, so the letters (*b*, *r*, and *t*) for the latter are not truly "non-Hawaiian" or "foreign", even though their post-1826 use in published matter generally marked words of foreign origin.

Glottal stop

*‘Okina* ( *‘oki* 'cut' + *-na* '-ing') is the modern *Hawaiian name* for the symbol (a letter) that represents the *glottal stop*.<sup>[64]</sup> It was formerly known as *‘u ‘ina* ("snap").<sup>[65][66]</sup>

For examples of the *‘okina*, consider the Hawaiian words *Hawai‘i* and *O‘ahu* (often simply *Hawaii* and *Oahu* in English orthography). In Hawaiian, these words are pronounced [hʌ 'ʊʌi.ʔi] and [o 'ʔʌ.hu], and are written with an *‘okina* where the glottal stop is pronounced.<sup>[67][68]</sup>

Elbert & Pukui's *Hawaiian Grammar* says "The glottal stop, ‘, is made by closing the glottis or space between the vocal cords, the result being something like the hiatus in English *oh-oh*."<sup>[69]</sup>

History

As early as 1823, the missionaries made some limited use of the apostrophe to represent the glottal stop,<sup>[70]</sup> but they did not make it a letter of the alphabet. In publishing the Hawaiian Bible, they used it to distinguish *ko* 'u ('my') from *kou* ('your').<sup>[71]</sup> In 1864, [William DeWitt Alexander](#) published a grammar of Hawaiian in which he made it clear that the glottal stop (calling it "guttural break") is definitely a true consonant of the Hawaiian language.<sup>[72]</sup> He wrote it using an apostrophe. In 1922, the Andrews-Parker dictionary of Hawaiian made limited use of the opening single quote symbol, then called "reversed apostrophe" or "inverse comma", to represent the glottal stop.<sup>[73]</sup> Subsequent dictionaries and written material associated with the Hawaiian language revitalization have preferred to use this symbol, the *ʻokina*, to better represent spoken Hawaiian. Nonetheless, excluding the *ʻokina* may facilitate interface with English-oriented media, or even be preferred stylistically by some Hawaiian speakers, in homage to 19th century written texts. So there is variation today in the use of this symbol.

Electronic encoding

The ʻokina is written in various ways for electronic uses:

- turned comma: ‘, [Unicode](#) hex value 02BB (decimal 699). This does not always have the correct appearance because it is not supported in some fonts.
- opening single quote, a.k.a. left single quotation mark: ‘ [Unicode](#) hex value 2018 (decimal 8216). In many fonts this character looks like either a left-leaning single quotation mark or a quotation mark thicker at the bottom than at the top. In more traditional serif fonts such as [Times New Roman](#) it can look like a very small "6" with the circle filled in black: ͡.

“Ōlelo Hawai‘i”

» ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i« (Hawaiian: *Hawaiian language*) within single quotes, font: Linux Libertine. The glyph of the two ʻokinas is clearly different from the one of the opening quote.

Because many people who want to write the ʻokina are not familiar with these specific characters and/or do not have access to the appropriate fonts and input and display systems, it is sometimes written with more familiar and readily available characters:

- the ASCII apostrophe ' , [Unicode](#) hex value 27 (decimal 39),<sup>[74]</sup> following the missionary tradition.
- the ASCII grave accent (often called "backquote" or "backtick") ` ,<sup>[75]</sup> [Unicode](#) hex value 60 (decimal 96)
- the right single quotation mark, or "curly apostrophe" ’ , [Unicode](#) hex value 2019 (decimal 146)<sup>[76]</sup>

Macron

A modern Hawaiian name for the [macron](#) symbol is *kahakō* (*kaha* 'mark' + *kō* 'long').<sup>[77]</sup> It was formerly known as *mekona* (Hawaiianization of *macron*). It can be written as a [diacritical mark](#) which looks like a hyphen or dash written above a vowel, i.e., *ā ē ī ō ū* and *Ā Ē Ī Ō Ū*. It is used to show that the marked vowel is a "double", or "geminate", or "long" vowel, in phonological terms.<sup>[78]</sup> (See: [Vowel length](#))

As early as 1821, at least one of the missionaries, [Hiram Bingham](#), was using macrons (and [breves](#)) in making handwritten transcriptions of Hawaiian vowels.<sup>[79]</sup> The missionaries specifically requested their sponsor in [Boston](#) to send them some type (fonts) with accented vowel characters, including vowels with macrons, but the sponsor made only one response and sent the wrong font size (pica instead of small pica).<sup>[73]</sup> Thus, they could not print ā, ē, ī, ō, nor ū (at the right size), even though they wanted to.

Pronunciation

Due to extensive [allophony](#), Hawaiian has more than 13 phones. Although vowel length is phonemic, long vowels are not always pronounced as such,<sup>[78]</sup> even though under the rules for assigning stress in Hawaiian, a long vowel will always receive stress.<sup>[80][81]</sup>

Phonology

Consonants

Consonants				
	Labial	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m	n		
Plosive	p	t ~ k		ʔ
Fricative				h
Sonorant	w ~ v	l ~ r		

Hawaiian is known for having very few [consonant](#) phonemes – eight: /p, k ~ t, ʔ, h, m, n, l, w ~ v/. It is notable that Hawaiian has allophonic variation of [t] with [k],<sup>[82][83][84][85]</sup> [w] with [v],<sup>[86]</sup> and (in some dialects) [l] with [n].<sup>[87]</sup> The [t]–[k] variation is quite unusual among the world's languages, and is likely a product both of the small number of consonants in Hawaiian, and the recent shift of historical \*t to modern [t]–[k], after historical \*k had shifted to [ʔ]. In some dialects, /ʔ/ remains as [k] in some words. These variations are largely free, though there are conditioning factors. /l/ tends

to [n] especially in words with both /l/ and /n/, such as in the island name *Lāna* ‘i ([laː ˈnɛʔi]–[naː ˈnɛʔi]), though this is not always the case: ‘*ele* ‘*ele* or ‘*ene* ‘*ene* "black". The [k] allophone is almost universal at the beginnings of words, whereas [t] is most common before the vowel /i/. [v] is also the norm after /i/ and /e/, whereas [w] is usual after /u/ and /o/. After /a/ and initially, however, [w] and [v] are in free variation.<sup>[88]</sup>

Vowels

Hawaiian has five short and five long vowels, plus diphthongs.

Monophthongs

Monophthongs				
	Short		Long	
	Front	Back	Front	Back
Close	i	u	iː	uː
Mid	ɛ ~ e	o	eː	oː
Open	a ~ ɐ ~ ə		aː	

Hawaiian has five pure vowels. The short vowels are /u, i, o, e, a/, and the long vowels, if they are considered separate phonemes rather than simply sequences of like vowels, are /uː, iː, oː, eː, aː/. When stressed, short /e/ and /a/ have been described as becoming [ɛ] and [ɐ], while when unstressed they are [e] and [ə]. Parker Jones (2017), however, did not find a reduction of /a/ to [ə] in the phonetic analysis of a young speaker from Hilo, Hawai ‘i; so there is at least some variation in how /a/ is realised.<sup>[89]</sup> /e/ also tends to become [ɛ] next to /l/, /n/, and another [ɛ], as in *Pele* [pɛlɛ]. Some grammatical particles vary between short and long vowels. These include *a* and *o* "of", *ma* "at", *na* and *no* "for". Between a back vowel /o/ or /u/ and a following non-back vowel (/a e i/), there is an epenthetic [w], which is generally not written. Between a front vowel /e/ or /i/ and a following non-front vowel (/a o u/), there is an epenthetic [j] (a y sound), which is never written.

Diphthongs

Short diphthongs				
	Ending with /u/	Ending with /i/	Ending with /o/	Ending with /e/
Starting with /i/	iu			
Starting with /o/	ou	oi		
Starting with /e/	eu	ei		
Starting with /a/	au	ai	ao	ae

The short-vowel diphthongs are /iu, ou, oi, eu, ei, au, ai, ao, ae/. In all except perhaps /iu/, these are falling diphthongs. However, they are not as tightly bound as the diphthongs of English, and may be considered vowel sequences.<sup>[89]</sup> (The second vowel in such sequences may receive the stress, but in such cases it is not counted as a diphthong.) In fast speech, /ai/ tends to [ei] and /au/ tends to [ou], conflating these diphthongs with /ei/ and /ou/.

There are only a limited number of vowels which may follow long vowels, and some authors treat these sequences as diphthongs as well: /oːu, eːi, aːu, aːi, aːo, aːe/.

Long diphthongs				
	Ending with /u/	Ending with /i/	Ending with /o/	Ending with /e/
Starting with /o/	oːu			
Starting with /e/		eːi		
Starting with /a/	aːu	aːi	aːo	aːe

Phonotactics

Hawaiian syllable structure is (C)V. All CV syllables occur except for *wū*;<sup>[90]</sup> *wu* occurs only in two words borrowed from English.<sup>[91][92]</sup> As shown by Schütz,<sup>[59][80][93]</sup> Hawaiian word-stress is predictable in words of one to four syllables, but not in words of five or more syllables. Hawaiian phonological processes include palatalization and deletion of consonants, as well as raising, diphthongization, deletion, and compensatory lengthening of vowels.<sup>[83][84]</sup>

Historical development

Historically, glottal stop developed from \*k. Loss of intervocalic consonant phonemes has resulted in Hawaiian long vowels and diphthongs.<sup>[94][95][96][97]</sup>

Grammar

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Hawaiian is an analytic language with verb–subject–object word order. While there is no use of inflection for verbs, in Hawaiian, like other Austronesian personal pronouns, declension is found in the differentiation between a- and o-class genitive case personal pronouns in order to indicate inalienable possession in a binary possessive class system. Also like many Austronesian languages, Hawaiian pronouns employ separate words for inclusive and exclusive we (clusivity), and distinguish singular, dual, and plural. The grammatical function of verbs is marked by adjacent particles (short words) and by their relative positions, that indicate tense–aspect–mood.

Some examples of verb phrase patterns:<sup>[69]</sup>

- *ua* VERB – perfective
- *e* VERB *ana* – imperfective
- *ke* VERB *nei* – present progressive
- *e* VERB – imperative
- *mai* VERB – negative imperative
- *i* VERB – purposive
- *ke* VERB – infinitive

Nouns can be marked with articles:

- *ka honu* (the turtle)
- *nā honu* (the turtles)
- *ka hale* (the house)
- *ke kanaka* (the person)

*ka* and *ke* are singular definite articles. *ke* is used before words beginning with a-, e-, o- and k-, and with some words beginning ' - and p-. *ka* is used in all other cases. *nā* is the plural definite article.

To show part of a group, the word *kekahi* is used. To show a bigger part, *mau* is inserted to pluralize the subject.

Examples:

- *kekahi pipi* (one of the cows)
- *kekahi mau pipi* (some of the cows)

## See also

- The list of Hawaiian words and list of words of Hawaiian origin at Wiktionary, a free dictionary and Wikipedia sibling project
- Languages of the United States
- List of English words of Hawaiian origin
- Pidgin Hawaiian (not to be confused with Hawaiian Pidgin)

## Notes

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## External links

- [Niuolahiki Distance Learning Program](http://niuolahiki.ahapunanaleo.org) (<http://niuolahiki.ahapunanaleo.org>) (a moodle-based online study program for Hawaiian)
- [Ulukau – the Hawaiian electronic library](https://web.archive.org/web/20061203064044/http://ulukau.org/english.php) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20061203064044/http://ulukau.org/english.php>), includes English to/from Hawaiian dictionary
- [digitized Hawaiian language newspapers published between 1834 and 1948](http://www.nupepa.org/) (<http://www.nupepa.org/>)
- [Hawaiian Vocabulary List](http://wold.cld.org/vocabulary/30) (<http://wold.cld.org/vocabulary/30>) (from the World Loanword Database)
- [Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke 'elikolani, College of Hawaiian Language](http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/dual/orgs/keelikolani/) (<http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/dual/orgs/keelikolani/>)
- [Kulaiwi](http://ksdl.ksbe.edu/kulaiwi/) (<http://ksdl.ksbe.edu/kulaiwi/>) – learn Hawaiian through distance learning courses
- [Hawaiian.saivus.org](http://www.hawaiian.saivus.org/) (<http://www.hawaiian.saivus.org/>) – Detailed Hawaiian Language Pronunciation Guide
- [Traditional and Neo Hawaiian: The Emergence of a New Form of Hawaiian Language as a Result of Hawaiian Language Regeneration](https://web.archive.org/web/20160124232335/http://www.traditionalhawaiian.com/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160124232335/http://www.traditionalhawaiian.com/>)
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- ["](http://www.honolulumagazine.com/Honolulu-Magazine/March-2012/Best-of-Honolulu-2012/Best-of-Honolulu-2012-Services/) (<http://www.honolulumagazine.com/Honolulu-Magazine/March-2012/Best-of-Honolulu-2012/Best-of-Honolulu-2012-Services/>) Article about Hawaiian Dictionary resource on iPhone in Honolulu Magazine. (May 2012).
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